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Committee on Foreign Affairs F Schneider 7/2/85 Testimony 809

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE BY CHAIRMAN HAMILTON AND CONGRESSMAN DERWINSKI TO BE ANSWERED FOR THE RECORD

I. General Questions:

1. The United States has now been operating the AWACS aircraft in Saudi Arabia since the start of the Iran-Iraq war last fall.

-- Has all information obtained been shared between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia?

DOD

-- What have been the costs of this exercise and who has paid for this temporary deployment? Will those arrangements continue?

-- Why can't we simply continue this deployment instead of creating the problems of selling the aircraft to Saudi Arabia?

2. The AWACS sale is the most controversial in this package.

-- Why doesn't the Administration support treating the F-15 enhancement package separate from the AWACS package, especially if approval of one is possible and the other in doubt?

PM

-- Are the Saudis insisting on the package concept?

-- Have the Saudis indicated they do not want the F-15 enhancement package unless they also get the AWACS?

3. What impact will the proposed sale have on U.S. force readiness?

-- Will the sale have a negative impact on the Air Force's retention rates for skilled AWACS radar maintenance, computer support and systems operation personnel?

DOD

-- Does the Air Force have enough AWACS to support a Saudi program in addition to other AWACS missions and maintain the four AWACS aircraft operating continuously in Saudi Arabia until 1985?

4. Secretary Weinberger indicated in the Senate that the U.S. never asked Saudi Arabia for joint control.

~~NEA~~ PM

-- Why didn't the U.S. ask?

Committee on Foreign Affairs

5. Mr. Buckley, in the spring in an informal presentation to this committee regarding the possible sale of the fuel pods, tankers, and AIM-9L missiles to Saudi Arabia , you stated that this sale would heighten somewhat the external threat to Israel and that Israel accordingly would receive additional F-16s for their military aid to enable Israel to obtain these F-16s.

PM — What compensation is planned to offset the threat from the AWACS?

6. Mr. Buckley, this administration has enunciated an arms transfer policy which states that U.S. arms sales must be in U.S. security interests.

— Will it enhance the U.S. capability to deter a Soviet advance into the Persian Gulf?

PM

— In a conflict situation, what capabilities would the Saudi AWACS offer the United States that this country would not otherwise have?

7. Is there a quid pro quo involved in this sale? In other words:

— Will the United States gain access to Saudi military facilities (such as in the case of Oman where the U.S. has gained access)?

DOD

— Will the U.S. be permitted to preposition military equipment in Saudi Arabia for use in the event of conflict?

— Would the Saudi AWACS and F-15s with enhancement equipment serve as prepositioned equipment to be used by the U.S. in the event of conflict?

8. With the AWACS and F-15 enhancement equipment, will Saudi Arabia be able to prevent the partial or complete destruction or seizure of its oil facilities by

DOD

— Iran?
— Iraq?
— the Soviet Union?

— For how long could Saudi Arabia hold off an attack from Iraq, Iran, or the Soviet Union without direct U.S. intervention?

PM

9. Would the Saudi AWACS continue to communicate with and provide information to the link up with U.S. ships and aircraft in the Persian Gulf?

10. Is it true, as recent press reports indicate that it was the United States that proposed to the Saudi Government that it buy AWACS rather than the Saudis first approaching the U.S. about buying the AWACS?

PM

-- When and under what circumstances were discussions initiated with the Saudis about a potential sale?

DOD

11. It is my understanding that there is no U.S. weapons system which we have sold and delivered to Saudi Arabia that does not have continued U.S. personnel in Saudi Arabia to assure its operation?

DOD

12. Is my understanding correct that at least 100 U.S. personnel will be necessary to operate the five AWACS throughout the entire life of the system?

-- After January 1990, how long could the all-Saudi AWACS crews operate the planes without U.S. personnel support?

II. Assurances and Conditions:

1. We would like to know precisely what understandings have been reached with the Saudi Government regarding the maintenance, operations and training related to the AWACS pending approval of the sale?

PM

-- Are these understandings written or oral?

-- In what ways are these understandings above and beyond assurances and conditions of sale contained in a normal Letter of Offer, Form 1513?

-- Will there be any further negotiations on assurances subsequent to Congressional consideration of the matter?

-- Are all of these understandings fully negotiated as of now?

2. Would you describe for the committee the security system developed for the protection of the AWACS aircraft and ground facilities?

-- Where will they be:

DOD

-- Is the U.S. Government assured the rights to conduct special security inspections throughout the life of the system?

-- Will Americans always have access to the aircraft to insure that proper and adequate security is being provided at all times?

Committee on Foreign Affairs

3. What understandings do we have regarding the geographic area in which the Saudi AWACS will operate?

-- Do we have an understanding on where the planes will be located?

PM -- Do we have an understanding that they will not be located at Tabuk?

-- Have the Saudis agreed to avoid flying the AWACS planes over Jordan and Syria?

-- Can the U.S. monitor and control where the AWACS are deployed and where they will fly?

DoD 4. If the United States cannot convince the Saudis to permit a U.S. presence on board the AWACS for the life of the system, what other means does the United States have to monitor AWACS data from the ground?

5. Is it accurate that the version of the plane which is being sold to the Saudis will not have five key systems which are designed to resist enemy jamming of radar and communications and to help manage large-scale aerial battle?

DoD -- Could any of these components be obtained commercially or otherwise from other sources?

III. <u>The Military Balance in the Region</u>:

DoD 1. For how long would Saudi Arabia be dependent upon the United States for an ability to coordinate and execute any intercept operation?

DoD 2. What technical capability would Saudi Arabia have to use the AWACS to direct fighter aircraft of other Arab states?

-- How limited would that capability be?

-- Could Saudi Arabia pass tracking data on aircraft flying in the area to other Arab states' (such as Jordan) planes of U.S.-origin? Of non-U.S. origin?

-- Could the Saudis do this without U.S. knowledge or acquiescence?

3. It has been suggested by some that the communications and software of the AWACS are not now compatible with Soviet-made aircraft that states like Syria and Iraq have.

DOD

-- Is that accurate?

-- Could it be compatible in the near future? If not, why?

-- What changes would be necessary for increased capability?

-- How could Saudi Arabia acquire those changes?

4. It is said that if this sale of the AWACS is disapproved, the Saudis might seek to pruchase the Nimrod plane from the British.

DOD

-- What discussions have been held between the Saudis and the British about a possible purchase of the Nimrod?

-- Given your information on the Nimrod, when could that plane be delivered to Saudi Arabia?

-- To you knowledge, do the Saudis have any other options than the Nimrod should the AWACS be disapproved?

5. Four U.S. AWACS have been stationed in Saudi Arabia for a year now. If the Saudi AWACS sale is disapproved, Riyadh may well ask the U.S. AWACS to leave.

DOD

-- What will this do to U.S. intelligence gathering capability and to the capability and vulnerability of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf?

IV. Threat Assessment:

1. What major potential threats does Saudi Arabia face today?

NEA

-- Which countries, in the Saudi view, constitute the greatest threat to its security and oil fields?

NEA

2. In Saudi eyes, is Israel considered a greater threat than either Iran or Iraq?

NEA

3. What threats do the Saudi face from the South?

-- From South Yemen?
-- From North Yemen?
-- Ethiopia?

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NEA/DOD 4. Is the Soviet Union considered a threat to the oil fields?

-- How close are the nearest Soviet-controlled air bases to the Saudi oilfields?

-- How easily can the Soviets strike Saudi oil fields at the present time?